











# **Family Activity** Guide

**Supporting Identity** and Empathy

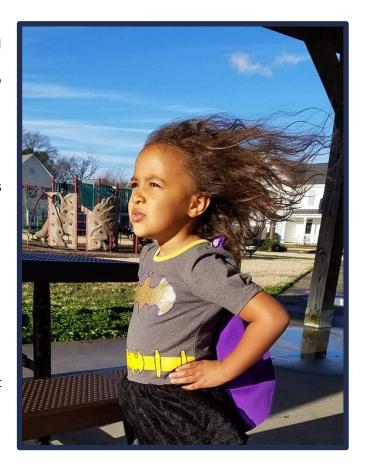


### In This Guide

In the <u>STREAMin<sup>3</sup> curriculum model</u>, we are committed to fostering an inclusive environment where each child receives equitable opportunities that are responsive to their strengths and backgrounds. All children deserve to feel accepted, embraced, and valued, regardless of race, culture, gender, religion, social class, language, or ability.

### We do this by:

- Building strong, caring relationships with each child and family. We take the time to know each child and their talents, cultures, beliefs, strengths, and needs. We also seek input from families.
- Giving each child "a voice" or "a say" in their learning and problem-solving.
- Using ongoing assessments and classroom observations to individualize support, so each child gets what they need.
- Using materials (e.g., books, dolls, images) that represent cultural, racial, identity, and social diversity.
- Coaching teachers to be equitable, inclusive, and accepting in their interactions and instruction.
- Embracing similarities and differences and responding thoughtfully to children's comments or questions about race, gender, culture, language, ability, or characteristics to promote their positive views of themselves and others.



In the guide this week, we provide suggestions and support for ways to talk to your children about these topics and support their development.

# **Identity and Empathy**

## What You Need to Know

Acceptance, respect, inclusion, and equity begin with our youngest learners. In the early years, children are forming their ideas about who they are, how that's the same or different from others, and whether and how that matters. They are also building empathy – imagining how someone else is feeling and responding with care. When adults have thoughtful conversations and interactions with children about topics such as fairness, kindness, stereotypes, and discrimination, children are free to embrace diversity, ask questions, and reject hurtful, harmful, limiting, and unfair language or messages.

## **How To Support These Skills**

Use these strategies to build on your child's natural curiosity and interest in fairness, embrace and encourage kindness, and empower your children to advocate for and defend themselves and others:

#### **Embrace Similarities and Prompt Children to Consider How Empower Children to Provide Care Differences** Others Are Feeling and Justice Notice and accept what we have in Prompt your child to provide care and Help your child see and care about common and embrace the ways that other perspectives. help them advocate for themselves and we are different. others. "Is that fair? How can "How do you think they "Yes, their family we make it fair?" are feeling? How would celebrates differently you feel if that happened "They are sad. How than ours. I loved how they..." to you?" can you help?"

## **Having Open Discussions**

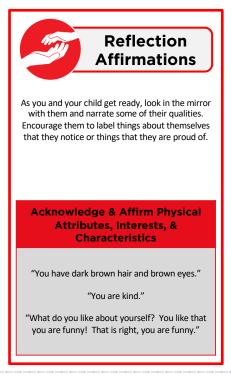
Children naturally notice and want to discuss differences. Their comments and questions aren't meant to offend or upset; they are eager for us to help them navigate and understand who they are in relation to their world.

- Answer your child's questions, comments, or concerns honestly and simply. Do this even though the natural reaction may be to distract or dismiss them.
  - Examples of statements to <u>avoid</u>: "Hush, that's not nice to talk about...", "You're too young to understand," or, "We don't see color."
- Prompt children to explain their thinking and feelings so you know where they need your help or clarification.
- Children remember what they see and how they've been made to feel. Talk openly with children so they can develop a positive view of themselves and others.
- It's okay to **not** always have an answer right away; you can say that you may need to read, talk to others, wait until you get home, or think more about their questions before providing answers.

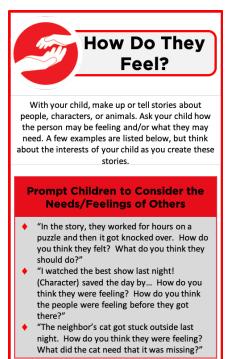
Additional Resources	
A town hall discussion with PBS and Sesame Street on Talking to Children Authentically about Race (recording available after the session).	NPR Podcast and short article about how to handle difficult conversations about racism, diversity, and inclusion.
PBS- Talking About Racism	NPR- Talking Race with Young Children

# **Activity Cards**

Below are Activity Cards designed to nurture your child's sense of self and identity, encourage them to embrace and accept others, and empower them to defend themselves and others.







# **Book Readings**

Book readings are a wonderful tool for sparking meaningful conversations with your child around race and diversity. Books open the window for children to embrace characters or situations that may be similar or different from their own experience. This helps build understanding, acceptance, and empathy. It's important to select books that represent a variety of races, cultures, languages, gender roles, abilities, or family structures in ways that avoid negative stereotypes so your child can see themselves and others in books.

You can use the books you have at home or explore these lists:

- PBS-13 Children's Books About Race and Diversity
- Parentbook Antibias and Equity: Resources for Children and Teens

Some books will directly address issues of race or differences. Lean into these conversations. For example, "Happy in Our Skin" by Fran Manushkin is a great book that helps children to be proud of themselves and to embrace others.

As you read: Pause to acknowledge and embrace differences.

**Read:** "Ginger-colored babies, peaches and cream, too – splendid skin for me, splendid skin for you!"

**Comment:** "Skin comes in many different colors or shades. Sometimes, it can remind us of food like cocoa, honey, or peaches."

**Read:** "What a wonderful world! Such a hullabaloo – with all of us in it! See the splendid view."

Comment: (pointing to the illustration) "Every person in this picture has skin. I see skin that is light, tan, and dark. Every shade of skin is beautiful."